

In response to the rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, the pronoun “it” has been replaced by a more definite statement which avoids any possible indefiniteness.

In response to the rejection of claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, the Examiner is referred to page 23, lines 27-30 of the specification. Claim 11 is referring to this portion of the disclosure and has also been amended to make the intended meaning more clearly apparent.

In response to the rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, the Examiner is referred to page 23, lines 30-32 of the specification. As with claim 11, it is believed that when claim 12 is considered in light of the specification, it does have a clear and definite meaning. Claim 12 has also been slightly amended so as to insure that the intended meaning is clearly apparent.

The rejection of claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is respectfully traversed.

In claim 14, it is important to appreciate that the first half of the claim refers to the initial processing of the user’s input (e.g., in the upper half of Figure 9), and in particular, that the user’s input is interpreted as pure continuation of the buffer content just read. The insertion of a marker to indicate this is described on page 65, lines 30-31. The second half of the claim refers to the “Final Repair” (lower left of Figure 9) where the system revisits the buffer contents so see if it has made a mistake -- i.e., it ought to find a

new interpretation of the user's input; see page 66, lines 22-25 and the following description where the marker CP signal a possible correction point.

In response to the rejection of claims 18 and 20-30 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, claim 18 has been amended so as to avoid any possible confusion.

The rejection of claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, has been mooted by cancellation of the claim.

The rejection of claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, was apparently intended to apply to claim 26 (because the objectionable word "current" does not appear in claim 27). The word "current" has been removed from claim 26 thus obviating this ground of objection/rejection.

The rejection of claim 36 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, has been mooted by the cancellation of this claim.

The rejection of claim 41 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, has also been mooted by the cancellation of claim 41.

Accordingly, all outstanding formality-based issues are now believed to have been overcome in the applicant's favor.

The rejection of claims 1-3, 5 and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by Gamm '887 is respectfully traversed.

Gamm fails to disclose that "at least some of said comparisons involve comparing only a leading portion of the coded response with a part of the buffer contents already uttered by the speech generation means", as recited in claim 1. According to Gamm (his

claim 1), a speech recognition system for n numeric characters has a recognizer that receives a string of spoken digits, and reads them back to the speaker for confirmation. If negative confirmation is received, the apparatus asks for a correction. If the correcting string has a length equal to or greater than the original input, it is used unconditionally to replace and (if longer) continue the original one. If on the other hand it is shorter, it is compared at different shifts with the original input to obtain a count of the number of matching digits. Using the shift that gives the largest number of matches, the new string is used to overwrite the old string. Gamm's description at lines 6 to 10, and the inequality sign in box 14 of Figure 3 are incorrect. As shown in Figure 3 the system will not work because the lower ("yes") exit from box 14 implies that $L(Z1) < L(Z2)$ and hence that $L(Z1) - L(Z2) < 0$. Thus the test in box 17 can never be true because m will never be less than a negative number.

A crucial point here is that Gamm's comparison always involves comparison of the whole of the shorter string with the longer one. It does not permit the new string to overhang the old one. Thus, Gamm deals with the case that the new string simply continues the old one, and the situation where the new string replaces part of the old one, but fails to deal with the situation (now addressed by the present invention) that the new string both replaces part of the old string, and extends it.

The Examiner's suggestion that Gamm discloses the claim 9 feature requiring a dependence on the status of the buffer contents is clearly erroneous. In Gamm the part of

the buffer that is being compared always has the same status. To say that something is a function of a value that does not change is clearly erroneous.

Gamm at 1:46-55 (or anywhere else) does not reference phrasal boundaries referred to in claim 10.

the Examiner's assertion that the added feature of claim 12 is taught by Gamm is also unsustainable. In Gamm, a "portion of the user's response that in any particular alignment follows the buffer contents" does not occur, because, as discussed above in relation to claim 1, Gamm does not perform comparisons involving this kind of overhang.

Given fundamental deficiencies already noted, it is not believed necessary to discuss additional deficiencies of Gamm with respect to other features of the rejected claims at this time. Suffice it to note that, as a matter law, it is impossible for a reference to anticipate any claim unless it teaches each and every feature of that claim.

The rejection of claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by Gould '189 is also respectfully traversed. However, to advance prosecution of the application, this claim has been cancelled thus mooted this ground of rejection.

The rejection of claims 42, 48 and 49 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by Ciurpita '439 is also respectfully traversed.

However, since claims 42 and 49 have been cancelled and claim 48 now depends from claim 44, this ground of rejection is also been mooted and does not require further discussion.

The rejection of claims 4, 6-8 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Gamm in view of Ciurpita is also respectfully traversed.

Deficiencies of Gamm with respect to parent claim 1 have already been noted above -- and are not supplied by Ciurpita.

The Examiner alleges that the additional features of claim 4 are taught by Ciurpita. However, while the feature of the first half of claim 4 is known per se (see discussion of claim 44 below), the feature of the second half of claim 4 (“wherein...”) is not disclosed by Ciurpita -- and indeed the Examiner does not even argue that it is.

Given the fundamental deficiencies of this combination of references already noted, it is not believed necessary to present further discussion at this time.

The rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Gamm in view of Vysotsky ‘058 is respectfully traversed. Fundamental deficiencies of Gamm have already been noted above with respect to parent claim 1. Vysotsky does not supply those deficiencies. Accordingly, it is not believed necessary to present any further discussion of the deficiencies of this allegedly “obvious” combination of references at this time.

The Examiner’s rejection of claims 43-46 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Ciurpita ‘439 in view of Irvin ‘917 is respectfully traversed.

Claim 43 has been cancelled. Independent claim 44 and its dependent claims 45-46 are clearly not taught or suggested by this allegedly “obvious” combination of references.

Claim 44 requires the system to await the user's response to a sequence that has been read back to him for confirmation, before it reads back the next one. The passages in Ciurpita that the Examiner relies upon do not teach this. In fact, Ciurpita's description contains statements that are in contradiction to this. In his paragraph [0036] he says "all recognition results are assumed to be confirmed unless explicitly rejected by the user"; and in paragraph 41 "all previous subgroups may be implicitly verified...".

However, claim 44 is written in European form and thus already acknowledges that this feature is known per se. The feature of claim 44 believed to be novel is that of the last paragraph that the division into subgroups was based on patterns recognized in the speech.

The Examiner cites Irvin as providing this. However, although the cited parts of Irvin teach recognition of a geographical part of a number (admittedly a "pattern") to determine locations and distances, there is no suggestion that the recognition of a pattern might be used to determine how the number should be separated into parts for the purpose of reading back. Therefore claim 44 is not obvious over Ciurpita and Irvin. Even if it were obvious to combine Ciurpita and Irvin, such combination would not result in a system as claimed..

The rejection of claim 47 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made "obvious" based on Ciurpita/Irvin in further view of Burnett is also respectfully traversed.

Fundamental deficiencies of Ciurpita/Irvin have already been noted above with respect to parent claim 44. Burnett does not supply those deficiencies. Accordingly, it is not believed necessary to discuss the further deficiencies of this allegedly “obvious” three-way combination of references.

The rejection of claims 51-52 and 54 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Ciurpita in view of Doyle ‘542 is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 51 has been cancelled. Claim 52 has been amended to self-standing independent form and claim 54 has been amended.

For claim 52, the Examiner alleges obviousness because Doyle’ recognition of noise is equated with the claimed “predetermined pattern”. However, noise is the complete antithesis of a predetermined pattern: what could be less predetermined than random noise? However, in the interests of expediting prosecution of the application “matching a predetermined pattern” has been changed to “matching one of a predetermined set of known utterances”.

The Examiner equates the claim 54 feature that the timeout depends on the dialogue state with Doyle’s teaching of varying timeout dependent on the signal-to-noise ratio, apparent on the grounds that the timeout parameter is effective only if the system is receiving. This argument is effectively saying that the timeout is effective when the thing is switched on, and that equates to a dialogue state. But this does not constitute varying the timeout in dependence on a dialogue state since there could not be a different timeout when the system was switched off! Necessarily the claimed feature that the timeout

depends on the dialogue state means that in a first dialogue state there is a first timeout value and in a second dialogue state there is a second, different, timeout value; not taught by Doyle. To make this more clear, claim 54 now requires first and second dialogue states corresponding to first and second timeout values.

The Examiner is thanked for allowing claims 31-34 and 53 -- and for the indication that claims 14, 18 and 15 would also be allowable once formality-based rejections have been overcome. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of these claims are therefore in now fully allowed status.

It is also noted that the Examiner has given no reason for rejecting claim 15. Presumably, it is therefore also considered allowable once claim 14 is allowed.

Similarly, claims 21-30 are apparently allowable once the formality-based rejection of claim 18 has been overcome.

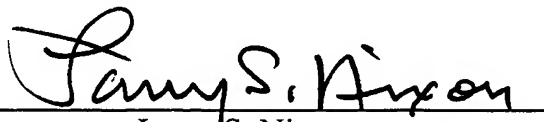
It is also noted that the Office Action also makes no prior art objection/rejection to claims 35-41. Since these claims all depend from allowable claim 34, then presumably they are also now in allowable condition (the formality-based rejection of claims 36 and 41 having now been overcome).

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There being no other outstanding issue, it is believed that this entire application is now in condition for allowance and a formal Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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